

AbleChild.org

PARENTS FOR LABEL & DRUG FREE EDUCATION

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Testimony of Ablechild.org

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

RAISED BILL 5145

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' STATUTES.

Ablechild appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony to the Public Health committee about the need to ENSURE that the added language be inserted into Sec 5. Section 17a-694 (b) (1) of the general statutes ensure

The commissioner shall disclose to the drug-dependent person at the time of release as part of treatment plans, information, both verbally and in writing, about the availability of the MedWatch adverse drug reporting system, including FDA MedWatch website address and 800 telephone number.

As this bill relates to drug-dependent persons it is critical they be made aware of the existence, and availability, of the federal Food and Drug Administration's MedWatch System. As part of an act concerning the care and treatment a drug dependent person it is part of informed consent to provided verbal and written information about the MedWatch System.

This new language is inserted to ensure that such persons are informed of the availability of the MedWatch System when they interact with the State of Connecticut in relationship to their mental health treatment.

What Ablechild is proposing does NOT require additional funding.

The FDA's MedWatch System was instituted in 1993 and is intended to provide important information to the federal agency from health care professionals and consumers. The reporting of drug adverse events to MedWatch can prompt the FDA to act on updating safety information, make labeling changes, influence how patients receiving drug products should be monitored, and issue warnings, safety messages and even prompt drug recalls.

The MedWatch system is completely voluntary, private and there are no costs associated with its use.

Due to the lack of knowledge about the MedWatch system, the FDA acknowledges that it receives less than one percent of all adverse reactions that actually occur.

The MedWatch system is the front-line defense against products that may pose safety hazards to consumers and, in short, saves lives.

The Sandy Hook investigation revealed how the MedWatch system could have benefited Nancy Lanza had the information been provided.

Despite advising the healthcare professional at the Yale Child Study Center that Adam Lanza had experienced an adverse reaction to the antidepressant he had been prescribed, no information about reporting

this adverse event to MedWatch was provided to Nancy Lanza. Nor is there any record of the healthcare provider reporting the event to MedWatch.

It is precisely this type of information that the FDA wants to know. Yet, as is seen in the case of Nancy Lanza's concerns about the drug Adam was prescribed, no one made any effort to report the adverse reaction to MedWatch.

Ablechild is simply requesting incorporating within an act concerning various revisions to the department of mental health and addiction service statutes inclusion to provide any persons utilizing mental health treatment the information about the access and availability of the Medwatch adverse drug event reporting system both verbally and in writing.

As this bill focuses on mental health, it is important to remind lawmakers that there currently are 70 million Americans prescribed mind-altering drugs, many of which, according to the FDA, may cause serious adverse reactions.

There is no downside to implementing a MedWatch education program in the State.

Thank you
Sheila Matthews
Cofounder of Ablechild

on mind-altering drugs

- One in Five adults take prescription psychiatric drugs
- Prescription drugs are the second most common substances to be abused
- 27,000 unintentional drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States
- 250million prescriptions for anti-depressants were written in 2010
- 10 per cent of high school pupils are prescribed drugs for ADHD
- Anti-depressants have been linked to a series of school shootings

By Tom Gardner

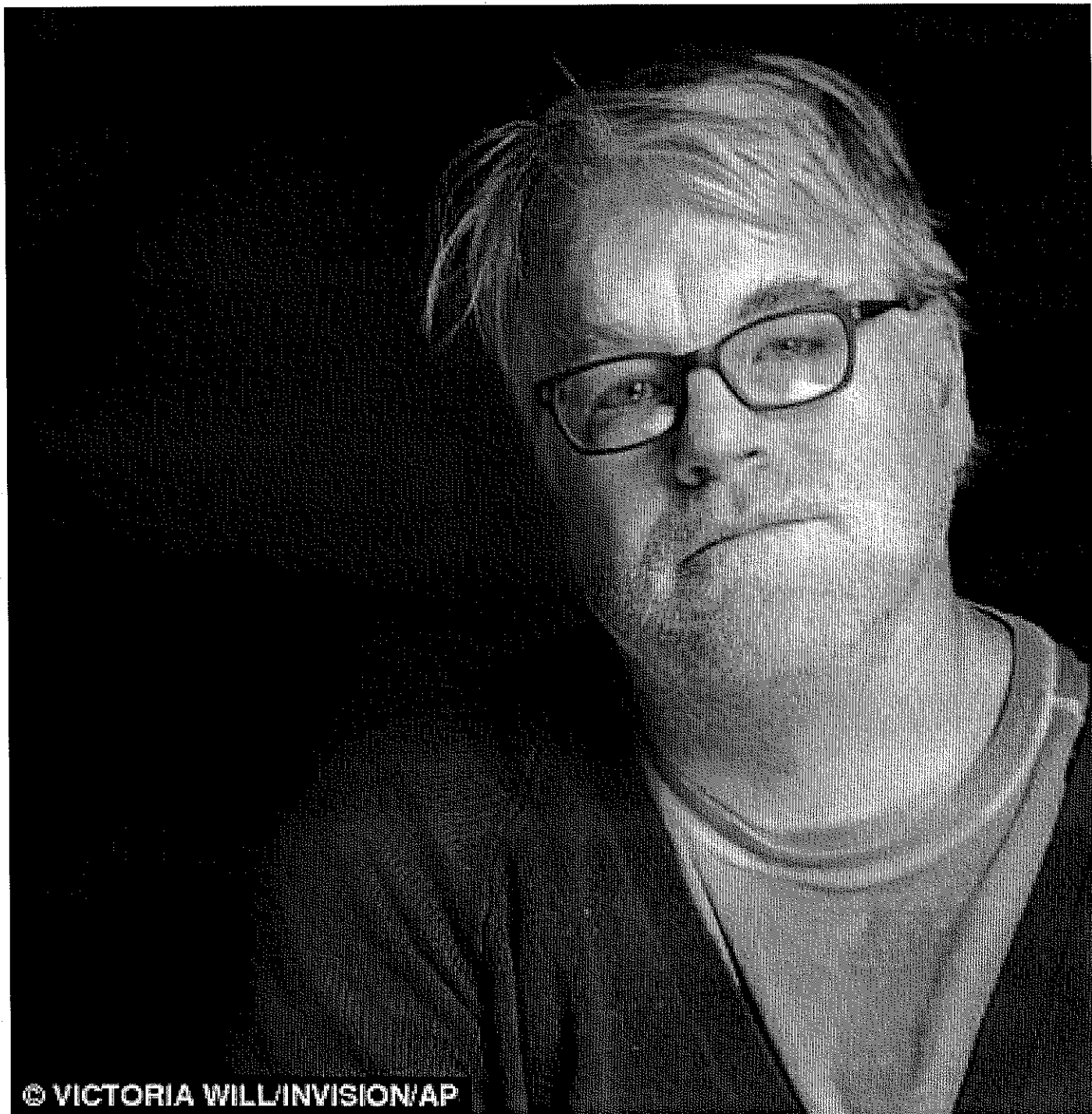
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More than 70million Americans - or one in five of the population - is on mind-altering drugs, a new study reported by WND.com has found.

The shocking survey revealed that prescription drug abuse as well as illegal narcotics use has reached epidemic proportions across the country.

Nearly 50 million people are thought to have been given high-strength substances by their doctors - leading to an alarming spike in drug-related deaths.

The death of movie star of Philip Seymour Hoffman from an apparent heroin overdose again promoted the spectre of illicit substances in the country's psyche.



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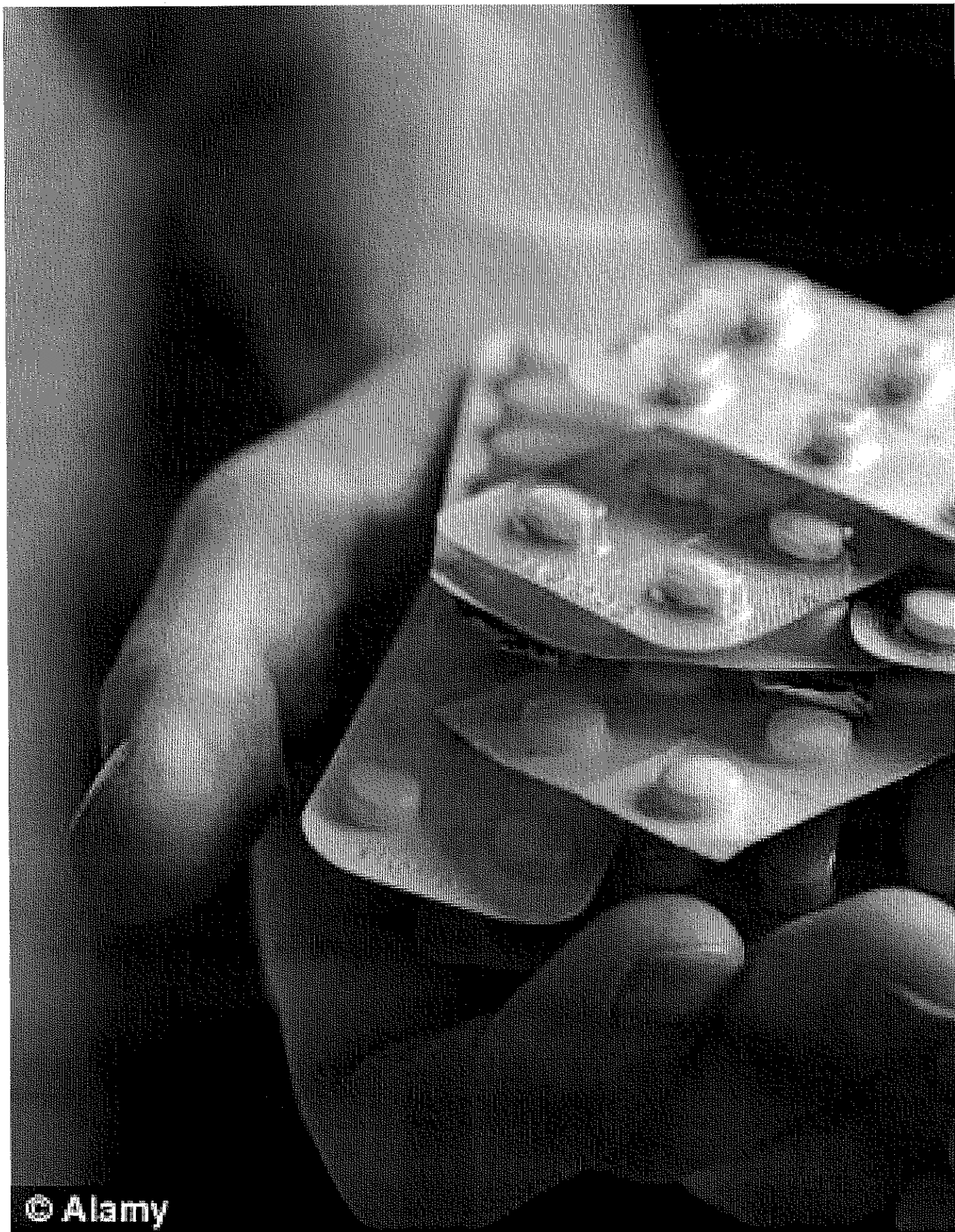
Overdose: Philip Seymour Hoffman was found dead in his New York apartment in a suspected heroin overdose

But new research by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has suggested the far greater hazard is posed by over the counter prescription drugs, such as anti-

depressants, sleeping pills and anxiety relief substances.

Experts have warned legal substances caused more overdose deaths than heroine and cocaine combined during the past decade, according to the U.S. report.

In 2010 more than 250 million prescriptions for antidepressants were written for Americans.



Shock: More than 27,000 people died in a single years as a result of an unintentional overdose on prescription drugs

A staggering 27,000 unintentional overdoses deaths were ascribed to prescription drugs in a single year, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention found.



Experts have warned that prescription drug addiction has reached epidemic proportions

The organisation was so alarmed by the figures, its report noted, WND reports, that: 'Prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States.'

For the last decade, 'more overdose deaths have involved opioid analgesics than heroin and cocaine combined.'

It feared the rise in the rate of opioid analgesics prescriptions – drugs marketed under the brand names Norco, Vicodin, Dilaudid, Exalgo, OxyContin, Percocet, Astramorph, Avinza - was likely to drive the trend even higher in the coming years.

The dangerous implications of so many people being prescribed these powerful mind-altering substances are finally being understood.

Recent research is beginning to draw a link between a popular sleeping pill called Ambien and - called as a hypnotic drug - to a series of crimes and serious accidents.

The drug was famously thought to have been a factor in a car crash involving the-Republican Patrick Kennedy.

Research into school shootings and violence among young people is finding links with the use of anti depressants.

Four and nine million by most estimates, mostly boys – to take Ritalin or similar dangerous psycho-stimulant drugs which can have similar side effects to cocaine or the amphetamines.

19 percent of high school-age boys in the U.S. are being diagnosed with ADHD and about 10 percent are currently being prescribed drugs for it, while 10 percent of high school-age girls are being likewise diagnosed.

Dr. William Graf, a pediatric neurologist in New Haven and Yale medical professor told the New York Ti